

Legislative Testimony  
February 20, 2009  
Appropriations Committee  
Sharon L. Castelli  
Executive Director  
Chrysalis Center, Inc.  
278 Farmington Avenue  
Hartford, CT 06105  
860-525-1261  
[scastelli@chrysaliscenterct.org](mailto:scastelli@chrysaliscenterct.org)

I am submitting this testimony in support of restoring funding for the Next Steps Supportive Housing Initiative that was rescinded in Governor Rell's most recent budget.

My name is Sharon Castelli and I am the Executive Director for Chrysalis Center, Inc., a multi service organization that assists individuals living with mental illness, substance abuse, HIV/AIDS, return from incarceration and homelessness to transform their lives to integrate successfully into the community. Chrysalis Center provides an array of supportive services but today, I am here to discuss supportive housing, a national best practices model of moving individuals and families living in chronic homelessness directly into their own apartments. This model has been in existence in the State of Connecticut since 1996- I have witnessed first hand people living on the streets/shelters that have moved into supportive housing and have watched their lives transform forever with successful outcomes. Examples of this are they do not return to costly emergency room, or detox or a mental health hospitals. This model has been replicated in our state and has a proven, cost effective track record of success.

*I want to ask for the assistance of the Appropriations Committee to restore funding for the 14 projects that responded to the RFP and were approved, and were ready to begin the process of construction this past fall. It appears that service funding from DMHAS and rental subsidies from DSS have been pulled out of the Governor's budget this past month. In short, we were approved to start but now it has been pulled out of the budget.*

Supportive housing projects help stimulate the economy by putting laborers, architects, general contractors back to work while building permanent homes for those who are living on the street or in shelters. Once housing is built, not only do residents (formally homeless) work and pay taxes but at my agency, we had a less than 2% rate of return to homelessness and emergency care services which cost our state at least 4-5 times the cost of supportive housing.

**Chrysalis Center has been working with the Housing Authority of Waterbury to propose new units of supportive housing called Begg Commons, which will provide 72 units of supportive housing for people who once lived in tent city under the “mix master” highway in Waterbury. Our project partners have local, federal and state support from neighbors, the mayor and local businesses to ensure that this “shovel ready” project gets built to deal with the rising numbers of homeless persons in Waterbury.**

**Chrysalis Center, Inc. is the one of the largest providers of supportive housing in the state with almost 300 units of single and scattered site housing, we attest to the success that supportive housing has in making an impact of ending long term homelessness in our communities.**

**On average 33,000 individuals are deemed homeless in the State of Connecticut, 700 of these individuals are living on the streets, in cars or in abandoned buildings. Many of the homeless are children. Issues such as the lack of affordable housing, unemployment, chronic mental illness, HIV/AIDS and substance abuse all are primary factors in an individual becoming homeless. Supportive housing marries decent, affordable housing with support services such as case management, linkage and referral to mental health and addiction services, employment opportunities and educational resources. Supportive housing provides this continuum of services to truly address the underlying issues of homelessness and prevent homelessness from happening again.**

**Supportive housing is also economical costing on average less than \$90.00 per day compared to the cost of housing people in shelters, correction institutions and hospitals.**

**Through the Reaching Home Campaign, leaders in the supportive housing field have set an ambitious goal of 10,000 units of supportive housing in ten years. To date, 3,000 units are operational or are in the development pipeline.**

**I urge all of you on the Appropriations Committee to restore the Supportive Housing funding so that we remain a leader in the nation for ending homelessness.**

**Sincerely,  
Sharon L. Castelli  
Executive Director**